

BUTTE WATER DISTRICT
GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT PLAN
ADOPTED May 13, 1996

1.0: Introduction: Assembly Bill 3030 (now Water Code §§ 10700 - 10755.4), commonly referred to as the Groundwater Management Act, was signed into law in October of 1992. The Act lists 12 components that may be included in a groundwater management plan. To the extent applicable, the 12 components are considered in evaluating and operating the Butte Water District (hereinafter "BWD") so that groundwater can be managed within the District and coordinated to maximize the total water supplies available while protecting groundwater quality.

1.1: Groundwater Basin Management: Department of Water Resources Bulletin 118-80 defines groundwater basin management as including planned use of the groundwater basin yield, storage space, transmission capability, and water in storage. Groundwater basin management includes:

- a. Protection of natural recharge and use of intentional recharge;
- b. Planned variation in amount and location of pumping over time;
- c. Use of groundwater storage conjunctively with surface water from local and imported sources; and
- d. Protection and planned maintenance of groundwater quality.

1.2: DWR Reporting Requirements: The Department of Water Resources shall, on or before January 1, 1998, prepare and publish, in a bulletin of the Department published pursuant to section 130 of the Water Code, a report on the status of groundwater management plans adopted and implemented pursuant to Part 2.75 (commencing with section 10750) of Division 6 of the Water Code.

2.0: Purpose: It is the purpose of BWD, by adopting a groundwater management plan, to manage and monitor groundwater resources existing and available within the District boundaries, including a possible extended service area created by Exhibit "A" to the Joint Water Districts' Agreement on Diversion of Water from the Feather River entered into on May 27, 1969 (amended 1990), with the State of California, DWR and/or a sphere of influence adopted or recognized by Butte County or the Sutter County Local Agency Formation Commission. Additionally, it is the intent of BWD to coordinate and cooperate with other local private or public water-purveying public agencies for the purpose of preserving, protecting and monitoring basin area groundwater extraction, distribution, allocation or exportation to insure compliance with Water Code Section 1745.10.

3.0: History of the Formation, Operation, Acquisition, Distribution and Maintenance of Water Supplies: BWD has acquired, and distributes, water for agricultural purposes. The background of BWD in the provision of water services is set forth in paragraphs 3.1 through 3.3.

3.1: History of BWD and the Joint Board: BWD was organized in 1956 pursuant to Division 13 of the California Water Code. The District joined with three other districts, *i.e.*, Biggs-West Gridley Water District, Richvale Irrigation District, and Sutter

Extension Water District in the purchase and acquisition of water rights and a canal system from Sutter Butte Canal Company. The four Districts and the Sutter Butte Canal Company entered into an agreement dated July 12, 1956, covering the maintenance and operation of the canal system. The agreement of July 12, 1956 was amended by: (a) an agreement and conveyance dated September 21, 1966 entered into by the Districts; and (b) an agreement and conveyance dated April 11, 1969 entered into by Biggs and Richvale and consented to by BWD and Sutter. The Districts then entered into four additional contracts affecting their operation, diversion facilities, main canal and available water including: (a) an agreement dated July 6, 1964 entered into by the State of California acting by and through the Department of Water Resources; (b) an agreement on diversion of water from the Feather River dated May 27, 1969 entered into by the State of California acting by and through the Department of Water Resources; (c) a water sale and exchange agreement entered into by Pacific Gas and Electric Company and the Districts on or about May 27, 1969; and (d) a consent agreement dated May 27, 1969 entered into by Pacific Gas and Electric Company and the Districts.

The Districts revised their operating agreement of July 12, 1956, on September 16, 1970, as made necessary by the series of four contracts discussed above. BWD shares water rights without allocation as to district boundaries with the three Districts discussed above, as much of the return flow from the use of said water rights finds its way into drains and natural channels and is recaptured and used by all four Districts.

The four Districts created the Joint Board with powers to control, maintain and operate the joint water distribution facilities of each district, and to maintain rainfall, snowfall, weather, evaporation, hydrologic, engineering and other data and records relating to Feather River water flows, water diversion rights and use of water within the Districts. BWD is allocated 24% of 555,000 acre-feet of water annually acquired by the Joint Districts pursuant to pre-1914 water rights and subject to deficiency limitations in the May 1969 agreement with DWR.

3.2: History of Distribution of Water Supplies: BWD distributes its water supplies annually during the irrigation season, generally commencing by charging its water distribution system with surface water supplies from Lake Oroville through the Thermalito Afterbay, as early as February of each year, and generally completing its water distribution by October 31 each year. BWD may continue water distribution in winter months to benefit wildlife habitat and aid in rice straw decomposition. Water supplies distributed during times of shortage are allocated pursuant to a proration and water duty imposed upon crops grown by District landowners as determined by the Board of Directors. Water shortages have occurred on a more frequent basis in the last 20 years and notably the drought years of 1976 through 1977 and 1987 through 1993. The District's manager coordinates the acquisition, operation and distribution of all BWD water utilized by District landowners and water users for agricultural production each year. Programs of water conservation are encouraged by the District in order to lessen or at least maintain the water duty for each crop grown within the District. BWD is unique among the Joint Districts in that much of its water is delivered through privately-owned ditches maintained by groups or associations of landowners who receive water from such ditches.

4.0: BWD's Adoption of Groundwater Management Plan Issues Set Forth in Water Code Section 10753.7: BWD adopts the following components relating to a groundwater management plan which are set forth in Water Code Section 10753.7.

4.1: Control of Saline Water Intrusion: BWD is authorized to take practical, reasonable and feasible steps to insure against adverse impacts created by demonstrated saline water intrusion within that portion of the groundwater basin managed by BWD. If needed or as required, BWD will establish and maintain a regular program of groundwater quality testing and monitoring in order to establish a baseline quality criteria for groundwater, which is available from BWD and includes an estimated saline content. Such monitoring efforts will routinely test on a periodic basis as determined by BWD in order to promote adequate water quality and that baseline water qualities are not adversely impacted or deteriorating as a result of saline water intrusion.

4.2: Identification and Management of Well Head Protection Areas and Recharge Areas: BWD does not manage wellhead protection areas and has no District-operated recharge areas. In the future, should wellhead protection areas be established together with recharge areas; the District shall manage such areas in order to monitor and insure the quality of the groundwater resource within the District.

4.3: Regulation of Migration of Contaminated Groundwater: BWD will periodically test certain areas within the District where it is believed that saline water intrudes in order to insure the minimization of any adverse impact to agricultural production, existing surface water supplies and existing groundwater aquifers. The goal will be to eliminate migration of any groundwater, which is contaminated.

4.4: Administration of a Well Abandonment and Well Destruction Program: BWD defers to Butte and Sutter County as domestic well regulators to administer well abandonment and well destruction programs. BWD will comply with requirements for well abandonment and well destruction particularly those that exceed an unsafe TDS level as determined by BWD.

4.5: Mitigation of Overdraft Conditions: BWD currently knows of no overdraft conditions or conditions of threatened overdraft that exist within BWD boundaries or expected expanded service area. Should conditions of overdraft or threatened overdraft occur within BWD; the District will cooperate with state and federal agencies to monitor and remedy the impacted area by learning the cause of the overdraft situation and attempting to implement factors which will: 1) determine and maintain a safe annual yield of groundwater for use within BWD in order to supplement available surface water supplies for the growing of crops on lands within BWD without producing overdraft conditions; 2) develop data and information which identifies impacts on groundwater with the neighboring areas that might be effected by groundwater use within BWD which may be part of a

conjunctive use program developed in cooperation with the State of California or other potential qualified water transferees; 3) establish mitigation measures to offset identified adverse impacts of groundwater extraction; and 4) establish quantitative limitations on groundwater extractions from particular areas and establishing criteria for well spacing and operations within the District to limit adverse impacts of groundwater extractions on wells within and without the District.

4.6: Replenishment of Groundwater Extracted by Water Producers: BWD will encourage groundwater replenishment where such groundwater is extracted by water producers, including the continued application of pre-1914 surface water supplies, to continue the recharge of aquifers. BWD will continue to monitor and develop data in order to insure the protection and use of the groundwater resource for the benefit of landowners and water users within BWD.

4.7: Groundwater Level and Storage Monitoring: BWD, acting through the Butte Basin Groundwater Users Association, will determine the static groundwater levels in the portion of the basin within District boundaries on an annual basis and will determine the static groundwater water level before the start of each irrigation season and at the conclusion of each irrigation season. Monitoring of the groundwater storage within the District boundaries will be commenced on an as-needed basis to insure that an overdraft condition described in Water Code Section 1745.10 does not and will not exist.

4.8: Development of Relationships with State and Federal Regulatory Agencies: BWD entered into an agreement with the State of California Department of Water Resources in May of 1969 providing for the storage of historically acquired pre-1914 rights in Lake Oroville subject to certain deficiency requirements during times of drought. BWD will continue to develop and maintain good working relationships with the staff of the Department of Water Resources as well as other federal and state agencies on an as-needed basis to protect and preserve both ground and surface water rights for the benefit of landowners and water users within BWD.

4.9: Facilitating Conjunctive Use Operations: Groundwater supplies available within BWD are recharged annually by numerous factors, including precipitation and the application of surface and/or extracted groundwater supplies for the irrigation of crops. The quantity and timing of recharging BWD's service area as a component of the basin depends upon a number of factors many of which are within the control of landowners, water users, the District manager, employees and Board of Directors of BWD.

4.9.1: District Water Shortages: Current District bylaws, rules and regulations and governing act statutes allow BWD to distribute available water supplies to District landowners in the event of shortages on a prorata basis which BWD's Board of Directors determines based upon numerous factors including types of crops grown, timing of

agricultural water needs, available groundwater supplies, etc. See Water Code sections 35453, *et seq.* Landowners facing water shortages are first encouraged to enter into private agreements with other landowners for the use of well water. If supplies are needed for BWD purposes, BWD reserves its rights, upon payment of reasonable compensation, to require use of groundwater in those circumstances where water shortages and/or failure or inadequate capacity of facilities cause shortages throughout other areas of the District. The terms of any District/landowner agreement regarding quantities of groundwater, maintenance and operation of facilities, term, compensation and distribution are the subject of negotiations between BWD and the landowners.

4.9.2: District Water Transfers: BWD has engaged in and will continue to reserve operational flexibility to engage in transfers of its surface water supplies to the State of California and/or other qualified purchasers of water in circumstances where shortages of water caused the potential for hardship in other areas of the State which have access to state or federal water project facilities and where BWD has a surplus of water supplies conserved by programs benefiting their landowners and water users. Prior to undertaking any program, BWD will evaluate any adverse economic or environmental impact of such conjunctive use program. In this way, groundwater storage capacity of BWD can be used in a conjunctive manner with surface water supplies in order to assist other areas in need of water in addition to landowners within the District and to the benefit of the District and its landowners, as long as such programs do not: 1) exceed the safe annual yield of the aquifer; 2) result in conditions of overdraft or otherwise fail to comply with provisions of California Water Code Section 1745.10; and 3) result in uncompensated adverse impacts on neighboring landowners effected by the program.

4.9.3: Review of Land Use Planning: BWD will review land use plans that may affect groundwater quality within Butte Water District, and will coordinate with the Counties of Butte and Sutter and the Cities of Biggs, Gridley and Live Oak to assess activities which create a risk of groundwater contamination.

4.9.4: District Approval of New Wells: To facilitate the monitoring of groundwater extraction and use within District, BWD may adopt rules and regulations subsequent to May 13, 1996, requiring any landowners desiring to construct and install a well within BWD to prepare a written request specifying: 1) size of the well to be constructed, 2) the location of the well; 3) the approximate distance in feet from all other existing wells within 3,000 feet of the proposed installation of the new well (inside or outside District boundaries); 4) the capacity of the well; 5) the depth of the well; and 6) service needs. The written request prepared in

writing shall be delivered to BWD's manager who shall submit the request to the District Board of Directors for approval or disapproval at a regular or special District Board meeting. Approval of construction and installation of a new well may be conditioned upon: 1) timing of well water extraction for agricultural operations, conjunctive use or water transfers; 2) mitigation of impacts on neighboring well owners (inside or outside District's service area); 3) well metering; 4) District well inspection; 5) District ability to curtail use of groundwater extracted pursuant to a conjunctive use program; and 6) any other action which the District may deem necessary or appropriate pursuant to its bylaws, rules, regulations, statutory authority or applicable state and federal regulations.

5.0: Implementation of Groundwater Management Plan: BWD shall implement this groundwater management plan and develop rules and regulations which further elaborate upon the contents of this plan, and shall engage in continuing cooperation and coordination with other groundwater users.

5.1: Annual Coordination Meeting: Pursuant to California Water Code Section 10755.3, BWD shall meet, coordinate and cooperate with other local agencies within the basin at least annually to coordinate groundwater management programs.